

ELDERFLOWER CORDIAL (makes about 2L)

INGREDIENTS:

- * About 25 elderflower heads
- * Finely grated zest of 3 unwaxed lemons & 1 orange plus their juice (about 150ml in total)
- * 1kg sugar
- * 1 heaped teaspoon citric acid (optional, helps preserve cordial)

METHOD:

1. Inspect elderflower heads carefully and remove any insects. Place flower heads (not too much stem) in a large bowl with orange & lemon zest.
2. Bring 1.5L water to boil and pour over flowers and citrus zest. Cover and leave overnight.
3. Strain liquid through a scalded jelly bag or muslin and pour into a saucepan.
4. Add sugar, citrus juices and the citric acid (if using). Heat gently to dissolve sugar, then bring to simmer. Cook for a couple of minutes.
5. Use a funnel to pour the hot syrup into sterilised bottles. Seal bottles with a swing top lid, sterilised screw tops or corks.
6. To sterilise bottles, either wash in warm soapy water and place on side in a low oven for 30 mins, or use a sterilising liquid, Rinse well then bottle when cool.

(recipe shared by Sue Amos)

WILD ROCKET PESTO

INGREDIENTS:

- * 2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- * 100g / handful wild rocket leaves, washed and drained
- * 50g flat parsley leaves
- * 60g pine nuts
- * 200 -250ml olive oil
- * salt and pepper
- * large hunk grated parmesan

METHOD:

- * Quantities are guideline only and can be adapted to own taste ie balance of rocket - parsley / just rocket / toasted pine nuts / more parmesan.
1. Can all be whizzed up together in mixer or pounded by hand in a pestle and mortar.
 2. Oil should lubricate mix not flood it. Adjusted to taste.

(recipe shared by Sue Amos)

BLACKBERRY LIQUEUR

INGREDIENTS & EQUIPMENT:

- * Large screw top jar or kilner jar
- * Lots of Burgess park fresh blackberries
- * Granulated Sugar
- * Vodka

METHOD:

1. Put a 2 inch layer of blackberries in your jar, then a covering of granulated sugar. Repeat until jar is full. Press down and add more blackberries so that the jar is really stuffed. Top off with sugar so that no fruit is exposed. Put on the lid and store in a dark place.
2. After 3 days, there will be a gap at the top of the jar, top up to the brim with vodka. Top up again with vodka in a few days.
3. From the end of the week, you can start to take out the blackberries with a slotted spoon to add them to fruit salads or trifles (Remember, they are alcoholic)
4. After a month, strain the liquid into a bottle. A green one is best to keep the nice colour of the liqueur. Try to keep some for Christmas – enjoy!

(recipe shared by Jennie Morgan)

CHICKWEED OINTMENT

INGREDIENTS & EQUIPMENT:

- * Double saucepan or basin in a saucepan of boiling water
- * Shallow wide necked screw top jar
- * Sieve
- * Odourless vegetable oil, grape seed is best
- * Handful of chickweed which you will find growing on soil that has been cultivated.
- * Beeswax. (If you don't know a beekeeper, Baldwin's sell this)
- * A few drops of essential oils (Optional)

METHOD:

1. Remove any roots, dirt or dead leaves from the chickweed and cut into approx 2 inch lengths and place in an oven proof bowl. Press down and cover with vegetable oil. Put in oven at 150c degrees or less. Meanwhile, you can make a batch of shortbread, and by the time this is cooked, your chickweed will be ready for the next stage.

2. Place a piece of beeswax about the size of an eyeball into the top of a double saucepan, add boiling water to the bottom half of the saucepan to melt the wax. Remove from heat. Strain the oil off the chickweed. Squeeze out the last drops of oil, then throw away the chickweed. Allow the oil to cool a little, then add to the melted beeswax in the double saucepan and stir.

3. Remove the top part of the double saucepan and leave to cool and set. You want this mixture to set into a thick cream. If it is too hard, re-melt and add some more oil. If it is still runny, re-melt and add some more wax.

4. When the consistency is right, re-melt and add some drops of essential oil to make it smell nice. Lavender is good.

5. Pour the melted mixture into the jar and leave to cool.

6. This ointment is good for dry or irritated skin. I keep a jar in the kitchen to use after washing up.

7. There are no preservatives in this ointment, so you should only make up a small quantity so that you can use it up soon.

(recipe shared by Jennie Morgan)

BLACKBERRY VINEGAR

INGREDIENTS:

- * 400g (1lb) blackberries
- * 600ml (1pint) white wine vinegar
- * 450g (1lb) sugar

METHOD:

1. Place the fruit and vinegar in a covered bowl and leave to steep for 3-5 days stirring occasionally.
2. Strain the liquid and measure it.
3. Add 450g (1lb) of sugar for every 600ml (pint) of juice and heat gently in a pan until the sugar dissolves, then bring to the boil.
4. Pour into sterilised bottles when cool.

(recipe shared by Sue Amos)

NETTLE ALE

INGREDIENTS:

- * 6L water
- * A small carrier bag of nettle tops, washed
- * Juice of 1 lemon, strained
- * Juice of 1 orange, strained
- * 750g caster sugar
- * 30g cream of tartar
- * 5g yeast

4. Gradually add the sugar, stirring constantly to ensure it is thoroughly dissolved, then add the cream of tartar, and lemon and orange juice.

5. Finally, once the mixture is tepid, stir in the yeast. Cover and leave for 2-3 days in a warm place, until it's obviously fermenting.

METHOD:

1. Bring the water to the boil in a large pan
2. Add nettles, stir, then remove the pan from the heat and leave to infuse for at least an hour until it is at blood temperature.

6. Remove any scum which has risen to the top in fermentation and siphon the beer into sterilised bottles and seal with corks.

7. Leave for at least a couple more days or up to a month before drinking.

(recipe shared by Sue Amos)

3. Carefully - you might want to enlist a helper at this point - strain the nettle liquid through a colander lined with a large piece unbleached muslin into a large brewing bucket or pan. Once the liquid has filtered through, squeeze the muslin to get the maximum amount of liquid into the bucket.

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